

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

09/683,321

Examiner

Christopher L. Lavin

Applicant(s)

CLINE ET AL.

Art Unit

2621

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to the amendment received on 03/15/05.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-11.
3. ☒ The drawings filed on 13 December 2001 are accepted by the Examiner.
4. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.
THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

5. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
 6. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
7. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 5. <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 6. <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date _____. |
| 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date _____ | 7. <input type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Amendment/Comment |
| 4. <input type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit
of Biological Material | 8. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance |
| | 9. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____. |

DETAILED ACTION

Allowable Subject Matter

1. Claims 1 - 11 allowed.
2. The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter: particularly using fixed radius spheres as building blocks in region growing for the purpose of segmenting a three-dimensional medical image where each sphere's voxels are compared to a threshold and region growing is stopped at a particular threshold. During an updated search the examiner has come across two pieces of art that although they do not anticipate the claims are relevant.

The first reference, Strum (website http://www.uni-koblenz.de/~lb/lb_research/research.csc3d.html); archived on August 3, 2001 by the Wayback Machine at www.archive.org) discloses a medical segmentation technique where an image is filled with fixed radius spheres. The spheres are aligned in a similar way as that described in this application. However the spheres are not grown from a seed point and do not stop at a boundary, rather they are placed throughout the entire image. The spheres are then thresholded and clumped together to form a 3D segmentation. However there is no motivation to modify this design to stop filling the image at boundary lines and to perform the threshold check during the sphere filling process.

The second reference Han (5,457,754) discloses a medical segmentation technique, see figure 16, that uses "circles" (the circles are actually squares) to find the contour of a region. There are several differences between Han and the application that

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cannot be overcome. First Han fills all areas of one of the two thresholded levels with "circles" if certain conditions are met. These circles are not grown from a seed point out. Second the pixels within the "circles" are not compared to a threshold value, rather 8 lines are drawn from the center of the circle and checked for intersections before a preset radius is reached. Finally the areas marked by the circles are used only as a starting point for a region growing system, which finds the accurate segmentation of the image.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

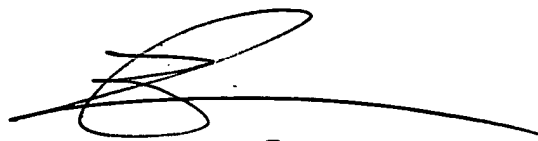
Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Christopher L. Lavin whose telephone number is 571-272-7392. The examiner can normally be reached on M - F (8:30 - 5:00).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Mancuso Joseph can be reached on (571) 272-7695. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

CLL



BRIAN WERNER
PRIMARY EXAMINER